

## **ACADIANA REGIONAL JUVENILE JUSTICE DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES**

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2025 AT 10:00AM  
JEFFERSON DAVIS PARISH POLICE JURY  
304 N STATE ST  
JENNINGS, LA 70546

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Members in attendance (6 members present constituted a quorum)

1. Sheriff K.P. Gibson
2. Kenney Courville
3. Sheriff Ricky Edwards
4. Judge F. Stanton Hardee
5. Oscar West
6. Jim Doherty
7. Parish President Jessie Bellard

Absent Members:

1. Sheriff Charles Guillory
2. Armond Schwing

Guests:

1. Vermilion Parish Police Jury President Chad Vallo
2. Vermilion Parish Police Juror Mark Poche
3. Jefferson Davis Parish Administrator Ben Boudreaux
4. Jennings City Judge Daniel Stretcher

**NOTE:** Public Notice of the Meeting was posted by Sheriff Ricky Edwards at the place of meeting at 9:30 AM on Thursday, November 20, 2025.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 18, 2025 MEETING**

The minutes were reviewed and approved. Motion to approve the Minutes was made by K.P. Gibson and seconded by Judge Stanton Hardee. Motion carried unanimously.

### **ACCEPTANCE OF RESIGNATION AND APPOINTMENT – ST. MARY PARISH**

Before discussion of the Sales Tax Election, the Board agreed to address board membership to allow full participation in voting. A motion was made to accept the resignation of Tania C. Washington and approve St. Mary Parish's appointment of Oscar West. The motion was 1<sup>st</sup> by Jim Doherty and seconded by K.P. Gibson. Oscar West was seated and welcomed.

### **NOTICE OF RESIGNATION – PARISH PRESIDENTS / POLICE JURIES SEAT**

Judge Hardee advised the Board that Judge Luke Abrusby submitted a formal letter of resignation from the Parish Presidents/Police Juries representative seat. Discussion followed regarding the statutory appointment process, noting that the replacement must be nominated by city judges.

It was suggested that Opelousas City Court Judge Shaunn Caillier-Harden be considered due to her experience with juvenile matters. Chairman Bellard agreed to coordinate with the city judges to formalize the nomination for Board consideration.

### **DISCUSSION – SALES TAX ELECTION**

Extensive discussion was held regarding the proposed sales tax election, including election dates, funding obligations, and legal authority. Guests (names listed above) expressed their opinions concerning the sales tax election.

It was reminded that legal counsel previously advised that because the Acadiana Regional Juvenile Justice District was created by state legislation, parishes are not obligated to fund the cost of the election. If parishes choose not to fund it, the responsibility would fall to the Secretary of State, subject to confirmation by counsel.

Election timing was discussed, including April, May, and June 2026 election dates. Legislative changes affecting primary and runoff dates were reviewed. June 27, 2026, was identified as a potential target date, subject to legal deadlines and further confirmation.

Members discussed the importance of coordinating outreach with parish leaders, judges, sheriffs, and law enforcement prior to the election to assess parish sentiment and develop a consistent message regarding the necessity of a regional juvenile facility.

#### **DISCUSSION – FACILITY NEED AND REGIONAL IMPACT**

The Board discussed the ongoing lack of juvenile detention beds, reliance on ankle monitoring due to insufficient capacity, public safety concerns, evacuation planning, and the regional cost burden currently borne by individual parishes.

Members reviewed cost comparisons with other regional juvenile facilities, including the Florida Parishes Juvenile Detention Center, and emphasized that no single parish can address this issue independently.

#### **DISCUSSION – JUVENILE CRIME TRENDS AND MEDIA REPORTING**

Judge Stanton Hardee reviewed juvenile crime headlines from April 12, 2021 through April 12, 2025, highlighting repeat offenses and concerns related to juveniles being released due to limited detention capacity. Board members were encouraged to conduct independent research using local media sources to better understand regional juvenile crime trends and long-term public safety and cost impacts.

#### **LOCATION, DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The Board agreed to hold the next meeting on Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 1:00 PM, at the St. Mary Parish Courthouse in Franklin, Louisiana. A calendar invite would be issued.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Parish President Jessie Bellard to Adjourn and second by Judge Stanton Hardee which was carried unanimously.